



KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

2020 ANNUAL REPORT: SPENCER COUNTY

OUR FOCUS

The Kentucky Nutrition Education Program, as part of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, encompasses two separate USDA programs: The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed). Both programs utilize agents and assistants to provide educational opportunities for limited-resource individuals and families to acquire knowledge, develop skills, and change behaviors for improved health and well-being.

OUR CHALLENGE

Poverty

According to U.S. Census estimates for 2019, the median household income in Kentucky is **\$52,256**, 20% lower than the U.S. median household income of **\$65,712**.¹ Kentucky also has higher percentages of poverty and food insecurity among its population compared to census estimates for the United States overall.

	Kentucky	U.S.
Total Poverty ¹	16.0%	12.3%
Child Poverty ¹	20.9%	16.8%
Food Insecurity ² <i>(Actual ratings during COVID-19 may be higher)</i>	14.7%	11.7%

In 2018, an estimated 7.3% of Spencer County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated 9.7% were children younger than 18.¹

Obesity

Today, about half of all Americans have one or more chronic diseases, often related to poor diet and physical inactivity.³ These include high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and stroke.



In 2019, the percentage of obese adults in Kentucky was **36.5%**, ranking it in the top 10 states for highest obesity rates in the country. The percentage of physically inactive Kentuckians was **30.6%**, ranking it among the top five most physically inactive states in the nation. Kentucky was also ranked in the top 10 for high percentages of adults with diabetes (**13.3%**) and adults with hypertension (**40.9%**).⁴ A large body of evidence shows that healthy eating habits and regular physical activity can help people achieve and maintain good health and reduce the risk of chronic disease throughout life.³

In 2020, 37% of Spencer County's adult population was considered obese, and 29% was considered physically inactive.⁵

OUR SOLUTION

Provide hands-on nutrition education to limited-resource audiences, focusing on:

- Buying and preparing healthy foods
- Developing new meal planning and cooking skills
- Adopting new healthy lifestyle behaviors
- Managing SNAP resources

In 2020, 4,195 contacts were made with Spencer County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

OUR RESULTS

IN KENTUCKY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2020, 96% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 75% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 92% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 83% made changes to be more physically active.



OUR SUCCESS

Pavilion projects

Because of COVID-19, the Spencer County Extension Agents had to learn how to change programming to reach our community. Facebook Live, Facebook, and the office website have served as tools to make the Pavilion Projects-To-Go a huge success in Spencer County. We distributed more than 1,900 projects to the community. We gave 950 kits to students through partnerships with Taylorsville Elementary School, Spencer County Middle School, and Spencer County High School. We provided Windowsill Gardens for science students and foods classes. The Summer Enrichment Programs continued virtually with school staff distributing four large kits. The kits were loaded with activities and projects for the youths and their families. A new family to the Extension program said, "Not only do we have sunflowers, but we have also been motivated to start a veggie garden. We just started pumpkins, which we have been wanting to plant for years now. My son learned that gardening is hard work. Thanks again for all of the great projects the Extension Office has made available during these crazy times." Another active family said, "We loved the conversation starters.



They made for great talks at dinner together. The kids asked to create more starters to add to our bag. It was nice to see my shy kids practice not only participating in but starting conversations. They learned so much about the food groups and not only cooking but planning meals. It has been awesome to hear them thinking about things like which meals made them full longer and which ones they had to add fruits and vegetables to. They really enjoyed and learned a lot about a healthy plate and why they need a healthy plate, as well as planning for that. Thank you!"

University of Kentucky
Nutrition Education Program
Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

SOURCES:

1. U.S. Census Bureau Small Area and Income Poverty Estimates
2. America's Health Rankings 2019
3. World Health Organization Media Centre
4. The State of Obesity Report 2019
5. 2019 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. This material was partially funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program — SNAP.



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Food and Environment
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